

## LITERARY INFLUENCE OF THE BIBLE.

Booksellers remark that every Christmas the sale of Bibles for the purpose of gifts grows larger. This is but an evidence of the awakening interest in the new form of Bible which does not confine itself wholly to the religious aspects of the book, but considers also the historical and literary aspects. Too little stress has been laid on the literary value of the Scriptures. The King James version is a monument of the purest and best English, and as such should be studied by every writer and reader in the land.

There was much wisdom in the old-fashioned custom of teaching children verses and chapters from the Bible. In his autobiography John Ruskin says that he owes his own appreciation of good style to his early habit of committing long passages of Scripture to memory. This is the greatest source of moral and literary culture that a child could have, for in the Bible alone the grandest truths are couched in the noblest words. The boys and girls who from childhood have been familiar with the music of the Psalms, with the magnificent imagery of Isaiah, with the poetry of Job, with the touching simplicity of the gospel narrative, have laid the finest foundation for mental culture.

An individual whose taste has been formed by the English of the Scriptures will be better fitted to appreciate Milton and Shakespeare and all the other great masters of our language. There is no fear that this aspect of Bible study will obscure its first and greatest purpose. The beauty of the words will never take away the glory of their meaning. The verses learned in childhood or studied for their literary value in youth will come back in some hour of joy or sorrow fraught with a new meaning of comfort and inspiration.—*N. Y. Daily Press*.

## HER LEGACY.

A lady with whom I was once conversing, said: "I am living off the legacy my dear father left me, and it will be enough to last during my life time; it was a rich legacy."

I said to her: "I knew your father left you a few thousands; I was not aware it was so much."

"O" she replied that was gone long long ago, along with nearly all we had obtained. It is the legacy of my father's prayers we are living upon now. You know the promise is, 'Even to the third and fourth generation of those that love him.' I can remember now the earnest pleadings of my father for his darlings; and although he has gone home long ago,

yet a precious sense of those prayers is 'round me as the walls of Jerusalem of old. I am assured that they will follow and sustain me through life—go with me even through the gates into the city of our God. I claim no special goodness, but my father was the best man I ever knew."

She lay back exhausted upon her pillow—for this lady was one of our "shut-ins"—and as I gazed upon her, suffering and helpless, poor—yet who shall say she was not a millionaire, an heir of the kingdom—I found she was trusting the Lord for every thing.

"And it always comes just in time," she murmured as a trusting smile lighted the wasted features.

How many of our parents of to-day are laying up for their little ones such a rich legacy? They may toil and delve, heaping together their treasures of earth, yet all may be swept away with the wave of some fearful panic. But a legacy of prayer laid up before the everlasting throne would be as enduring as the city itself.—*American Messenger*.

## SISTER NELL.

Some years ago, as I sat at the door of a summer boarding-house in a remote health-resort, I noticed, among the crowd a party of young people—two or three pretty girls and as many bright young men—all waiting for the mail."

"Oh, dear!" said the prettiest of the girls, impatiently. "Why don't they come? Are you expecting a letter, Mr. Allison?" and she turned to a tall youth standing near.

He smiled.

"I'll get one, surely," he said. "It's my day. Just this particular letter always comes. Nell is awfully good; she is my sister, you know; and no fellow ever had a better one."

The girl laughed, saying, as he received his letter, "My brother Harry would think he was blessed if I wrote him once a year!"

Gradually the others drifted away; but Frank Allison kept his place, scanning eagerly the closely written sheets, now and then laughing quietly. Finally he slipped the letter into his pocket; and, rising, saw me looking at him.

"Good morning, Miss Williams," he said cordially; for he always had a pleasant word for us older people.

"Good news?" I questioned, smiling.

"My sister's letters always bring good news," he answered. "She writes such jolly letters!"

And, unfolding this one, he read me scraps of it—bright jottings, with here and there a little sentence full of sisterly love and earnestness. There was a steady

light in his eyes as, apologizing for "boring" me, he looked up and said quietly, "Miss Williams, if I ever make any thing of a man, it will be sister Nell's doing."

And, as I looked at him, I felt strongly what a mighty power "sister Nell" held in her hands—just a woman's hands, like yours, dear girls, and perhaps no stronger or better; but it made me wonder how many girls stop to consider how they are using their influence over these boys, growing so fast towards manhood, unworthy or noble, as the sisters choose.

There is but one way, dear girls; begin at once, while they are still the little boys of the home circle, ready to come to "sister" with every thing. Let them feel that you love them. These great, honest boy hearts are both tender and loyal, and if you stand by these lads now, while they are still neither boys nor men, while they are awkward and heedless, they will remember it when they become the men you desire to see them. Do not snub them; nothing hurts more than a snub; nothing more effectually closes the heart than thoughtless ridicule.

Have patience, girls—that gentle patience whose perfect work will surely win the smile of the Master, who grants to all of us who do the Father's will that we should be His "sister." And for the sake of the great Elder Brother who dignified with His divine touch these earthly relationships, shall we not be more tender, more patient, more loving with those who call us "sister?"—*Everybody's Magazine*.

## THAT'S THE TROUBLE.

A few years ago, while riding in a manufacturing district, returning home one Sunday evening from ministerial duties, I was accosted by a man who, though intoxicated, seemed resolved to enter into conversation. He admitted that his conduct was wrong, and said he was constantly forming resolutions of amendment. He was poor and unhappy at his home because he was a Sabbath-breaker. "Many a time," he said, "I leave my home on a Sunday morning to go to a place of worship, but then the saloons are open. I generally pass one or two, and at the door of the third stands, perhaps, an old acquaintance. He invites me in, and then it is all over with me. I spend the money I should keep my family with, and have to work hard all the week, and to struggle at the same time with headache and hunger." I shall never forget his concluding words; they were spoken with the energy of a great feeling. The poor fellow talked himself sober. "Sir," said he, "if the great folks want to keep us poor folks sober, they should shut up the traps that catch us."—*Words of Life*.